

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET MEETS THE TEST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. MILLER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, we have heard since the election of November last, and all of last year, that the goal of the Republicans in Congress was a 7-year, CBO-scored, balanced budget. And the challenge over the last several months apparently was to get the President of the United States to agree to put on the table a 7-year, CBO-scored, balanced budget.

The President of the United States has done that. He has met that test. CBO has scored that budget. There is some \$700 billion in savings in that proposal sufficient to balance the budget in these 7 years; and yet we now find that rather than take those savings and balance the budget, the Republican majority would rather end the negotiations. So those negotiations have been ended when there is \$700 billion in cash sitting on the table that all they have to do is walk in and pick it up and walk out, and the American taxpayers get all the benefits that we have all talked about from balancing the budget.

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Rather than do that, apparently now there is an idea afoot that what we will have is a downpayment, a downpayment on the deficit. I have been here 20 years, and I have only seen one downpayment on the deficit that lowered the deficit. That is what President Clinton did 2 years ago when the deficit was over \$250 billion, and today it is \$167 billion. All the other downpayments on the deficit never quite got around to lowering the deficit.

So right as we are on the eve of a balanced budget, we find ourselves in the unusual position of the people who claim to have been the strongest proponents of that balanced budget, and I do not think there is any question that they have done everything to move this Congress toward a balanced budget, they now walk away from the negotiations because it is not everything that they could have had.

Rarely in negotiations, whether it is in business or sports, in your family or in the Congress, do you get your sway on everything. And so we are talking about \$700 billion in savings sitting on the table, waiting for somebody to pick it up. It is \$297 billion in discretionary cuts, \$124 billion changes in Medicare, \$73 billion in interest savings, \$67 billion in other mandatory spending changes, \$59 billion changes in Medicaid, corporate subsidies and compliance, \$56 billion and \$41 billion in welfare changes. This is a lot of money, my colleagues. This is the largest deficit reduction that we have seen. But now we are going to turn it down because it is not perfect? Because it is

not exactly apparently what the majority wanted?

We can still make these changes in Medicare. We can have a separate vote on this floor. We can have a separate vote on this floor on medical savings accounts, make them part of it, either in or out. But we do not have to hold up the changes necessary to get the largest entitlement program in the country under some control.

We can make changes and we can still discuss whether Medicaid is going to have nursing home standards or it is not going to have nursing home standards, whether it is going to be an entitlement or a personal entitlement. We can have those debates afterwards. We can spend this whole year debating that subject. But we can get the budgetary savings, we can get the deficit reduction now while it is real. That is when it is important.

We know that essentially, that essentially we would dramatically change, under the coalition welfare bill that was passed, that was voted on in this Congress, I believe every member of the Democratic Party voted for, dramatically restructures welfare as we know it in this country, dramatically restructures your ability to stay on welfare forever without meeting your responsibilities to try to find a job and to go to work, substantially changes your obligations if you are going to receive taxpayer dollars. The requirements of going to work, the requirements of time limits on welfare, all of that can be achieved and \$41 billion in savings at the same time. But we are going to turn it down because it is not exactly what the Republicans wanted in their bill.

This is incredible. This is incredible that we would be here on this eve, and now we are going to back up and we are going to create some kind of stopgap budget reduction legislation with a tax cut, and we are going to sort of give some kind of partial savings.

I just find that when we see that the President of the United States has come this far and is this willing to make these kinds of concessions and these kinds of changes, changes that are needed in each and every one of these programs, that somehow the Republican majority in this Congress will not give the American people those savings, those savings that will bring the budget to balance, those savings, as one of the previous speakers in the well said, will provide for reductions in interest rates on home mortgages, on credit cards, on student loans, and all of the things that America borrows for, that will provide real money in the pockets of working families in this country, is now going to be turned down by the Republican majority.

MAJOR RULING IN ENFORCEMENT OF GATT AGAINST UNITED STATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HEFLEY). Under a previous order of the

House, the gentleman from Oklahoma [Mr. COBURN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, I find it interesting that the gentleman that just spoke on the Republicans not wanting to get to a balanced budget and not negotiating, the very gentleman that spoke voted against the first balanced budget act this country has seen in 30 years.

Mr. Speaker, it is no surprise to me that the first ruling of the World Trade Organization in enforcement of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade was against the United States. Many people had predicted that that would happen if we in fact gave up our sovereignty to the World Trade Organization as far as our international trade is concerned.

The World Trade Organization argued that the Clean Air Act, one of the most important environmental laws that we have, unfairly discriminated against foreign oil refiners whose fuel cannot meet our clean air standards. It was predicted that this was going to happen, but everyone ignored this prediction saying it would not happen. It has happened now. Everyone said it could not, but it has.

Rather than target the harsh and blatantly protectionist regulatory regimes of our major competitors, the World Trade Organization has now predictably chosen to target U.S. environmental laws. This ruling gives major competitors against the United States a huge bonus while overturning U.S. laws written to protect the health of our citizens in one fell swoop.

And as unbelievable as all this sounds, our executive branch of Government, the President, has not decided whether to appeal this ruling. It is outrageous. This decision should be appealed immediately and, further, we should withdraw from the World Trade Organization, and we should use our contributions to reduce our deficit.

We should give significant and clear consideration to a repudiation of the last GATT treaty. Congress and the American public have clearly and consistently supported clean air standards and set an example for the world of the importance of the clean air environment. Are we now going to let the World Trade Organization thwart the will of the American people and overturn American laws? Are we going to let foreign arbiters of the World Trade Organization now dictate to this Congress, to the U.S. Congress what laws we can and cannot pass? I for one will not stand by while foreign judges of the World Trade Organization rule on the validity of the American environmental and labor laws. I will not surrender our sovereignty to the World Trade Organization, nor should we.

American business and manufacturers have invested billions of dollars in complying with the Clean Air Act. It is not correct, it is not right, it is not fair for foreign competitors that have not been faced with the kind of investment

that our businesses have been faced with to import into the United States to the disadvantage of U.S. companies who have complied with our laws.

I say that we should not have any special breaks for foreign oil companies, if they cannot meet our environmental requirements, and that we should say no to the World Trade Organization or to any foreign organization telling this government what we will or will not do.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. COBURN. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for the remarks he just made.

I represent a district that has a very substantial amount of refining as part of the economic makeup of our district. It has been that way for many years in northern California. Those refiners, based upon these Federal laws, have invested billions of dollars in clean fuels projects at each of these refineries and have had to make that decision. As the gentleman knows, they were very uneasy about making that decision because the question was, what would the market be for the gasoline and would the consumer pay more for these clean fuels. They went ahead and did that on these assurances.

Now we find out that people who were on the same notice in Venezuela and elsewhere, they could have made this investment in their refineries to meet this market but they have chosen instead to go to the World Trade Organization and to challenge this legislation, to get it overturned so they can continue to sell a product into the market that undermines the decisions that this Congress made about the health and safety of our citizens.

I want to thank the gentleman very much for his remarks. I would join him. We have tried to get others in the Congress to understand that this is just the beginning of the assault on a number of environmental health and safety laws where this Congress has made a determination about those benefits for the American people that can be undermined by foreign competitors who want to continue to challenge them as though they are indirect trade tariffs when in fact they are not. They are health and safety laws for the benefit of the people of this country.

Mr. COBURN. The other thing that we ought to pay attention to is, this is the beginning. It is not just going to be on environmental laws. It is going to be on every other law that this Congress has passed that the World Trade Organization is going to try to subvert and undermine the laws that this very Congress passed for the well-being and benefit of this country.

We should stop it now before it continues, and we should appeal. And we should force, through a resolution of this Congress, the President to ask for an appeal of this ruling.

Should we not get that, then we should do the legislatively responsible

thing to reverse our participation in the World Trade Organization.

ON THE CONTINUING RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland [Mrs. MORELLA] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MORELLA. This is the time, Mr. Speaker, that we talk about what action is going to take place on the floor of this Chamber later today, because quite frankly, it is critical that we pass this continuing resolution today, whatever we call it, to avoid another partial Government shutdown. A partial Government shutdown leads to a massive Government slowdown. This is something we can ill afford.

The previous two shutdowns cannot be repeated. They were devastating to Federal employees, to contractors, to their families, to the local economy, universities, researchers, and the entire American public. The previous two partial Government shutdowns, as I mentioned, have resulted in a massive slowdown and an erosion of confidence in Government.

A longer-term solution is still necessary. Agencies cannot make long-term spending decisions without long-term appropriations. Vendors with long-term contractors cannot be paid. It may be unwilling or unable to continue on a month-to-month basis. Contractors, Federal employees and their families remain very anxious about their future.

Etymologically, the word "disease," if you look at the Oxford English Dictionary, comes from the words "absence of ease." There is really an absence of ease out there in our country, a disease, so to speak. This is something that we in Government can correct.

I hope that this continuing resolution, whether we call it the balanced budget down payment act or whatever, that will come up today will be the first step in increased cooperation to resolve the issues surrounding the remaining appropriations bills and a balanced budget agreement, not the first in a series of continuing resolutions that we are going to revisit every month or every 6 weeks.

I strongly urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to compromise on the provisions that are keeping these bills from being passed. Of course I ask the President to engage fully in coming up with a balanced budget. We must find a real solution to end the disruption we have caused in the lives of our Federal work force. So I hope, Mr. Speaker, today will be the day.

STATEMENT ON CUBA TRIP

(Mr. MOAKLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MOAKLEY. Mr. Speaker, my recent visit to Cuba has been the subject

of some controversy. Some of my colleagues, who have surprisingly never even talked to me about the trip, have cynically tried to characterize my views and the trip as insensitive to human rights and pro-Castro.

Mr. Speaker, that is a blatant distortion of the truth.

My position on Cuba is the same as that put forth by the conference of Catholic Bishops. My position is also the same as Cuba's Catholic Cardinal, Cardinal Jaime Ortega.

I might add, as well, that my position is the same as many of Cuba's leading dissidents—including Elizardo Sanchez, Martha Beatriz Roque, Vladimiro Roca, and Rene Gomez Manzano, just to name a few.

Are these people, some of whom have spent time in Cuban jails, insensitive to human rights? Are these people pro-Castro?

Their position, and my position, it that we can best encourage human rights reforms and begin a transition to a more democratic Cuba through increased relations and not by more isolation. They, like me, oppose the so-called Helms-Burton bill.

Mr. Speaker, I realize my public position on Cuba makes me the target of a very well-financed lobby here in the United States. But, let me say clearly and sincerely, I believe in my heart that I am advocating what is best for the courageous people who live on that island and who yearn for a day when human rights and freedoms are truly respected.

MOAKLEY STATEMENT ON CUBA TRIP

WASHINGTON.—Congressman Joe Moakley released the following statement from his office today on his recent trip to Cuba:

"I traveled to Cuba for two basic reasons—first, to try to create an atmosphere in which relations between the U.S. and Cuba could be improved; and, second, to find ways to support ordinary Cuban people.

My trip was hosted by the ABC Forum on Cuba, a non-profit organization dedicated to educating U.S. citizens on issues related to Cuba and to supporting the activities of NGO's promoting human rights and helping the Cuban people.

Our delegation consisted of 23 participants ranging from business leaders to NGO's like the Boston-based Oxfam America.

I met with a variety of people while in Cuba—including top Cuban government officials, church leaders, dissidents, NGO's, foreign diplomats, U.S. officials.

I even had the chance to visit a small group of farmers who are working with Oxfam on a project to increase agriculture production for sale on the open market. These farmers and all the ordinary people I had the chance to meet, were excited to talk with our delegation and candid about their hopes for closer ties with people in the United States.

In addition, my aide Jim McGovern and I had a 2 hour private meeting with Cuban President Fidel Castro. After which, the Cuban leader met with our entire group for another 2 hour session. I told President Castro that we are at a crossroads in terms of U.S.-Cuba relations. The United States Congress is nearing final action on the so-called Helms-Burton Bill which, if signed into law, will strengthen the current economic embargo and end any possibility for improved relations anytime in the near future.